



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Via Village Webex Link:
Dial 1296808032@southorange.webex.com**

Thurs. January 27, 2022 from 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Adequate notice given to the public

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

ATTENDANCE Linda BECK (Chairperson), Bill HASKINS**, Karen Hilton**, David KRAIKER* (Planning Board Rep), Richard BELL* (Secretary), Barbara BOUR*, Robert ORGERA*, Jessica MILLER, Larry HIRSCH*, Lorraine GRAVES*, Andy STONE, Michael PARLAPIANO, Olivia LEWIS-CHANGE***, Joe (from DPW), Julia FLATH, Whelan MAHONEY * = Commissioner, ** = Trustee, *** = Alternate

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2021 MINUTES - APPROVED

PUBLIC COMMENTS - No public comment

1. BOT/PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE - (Haskins/Hilton)

SOEC Budget overview and status - Bill -

DPW Meeting - robust meeting this morning. Stormwater was a big topic at the meeting. They are working on addressing issues in different parts of town and setting up a Storm Water Utility - more comprehensive stormwater survey of our system.

Recycling: Mike Candarella gave us an update on status at the DPW yard. Going to do source separation in containers and do some different things with flow of traffic. Also signage and education is important. Bill: main thing is we are separating and marketing it and getting value for the materials.

Recycling RFP: will discuss later. They confirmed in the meeting that DPW would return to Spring Planting themselves - 70-80 trees. Also confirmed that they would keep up with watering trees that we planted. They will also give fresh mulch on all trees planted in parks.

Regarding Trees - David is getting DPW to use Tree Plotter, but some guys are still recording stuff by hand. If they can hand that info onto Megan, it can be put into the Tree Plotter database. Joe from DPW is here tonight.

Karen: we still don't have a firm plan on changes to the DPW yard - we're not there yet - looking for more changes down there.

Linda: presented proposed budget to the BOT - she requested \$170,000 for various things we are asking for to improve quality of life in South Orange. Money is included for Tree Plotter - may have added features. ANJEC membership, Composting, Adopt a Storm Drain software, maintenance budgets and more, and \$157,000 for trees to bring our inventory up to speed.

2. POLICY UPDATES (Next BOT meeting: November 22nd)

Leaf Blower Ordinance – status - Bill update: first reading will be at the Feb. 14 BOT meeting. Karen noted that they are hearing a lot of chatter about trouble with the ordinance. It's not going to be a slam dunk - it will take some organizing to get this passed. Julia asked if we could ask Maplewood to circulate their email list to drum up support for the ordinance.

Shade Tree Committee to Commission Ordinance - Bill status update - he noted that Walter could give us an update from Shade Tree Committee re the mayor of Ridgefield Park. Walter notes he is still trying to connect with the mayor to find out whether we in fact need to be a commission. He is consulting with NJUCF to make connections. Paul Parlapiano sent a presentation. He wonders if we need a commission legally or whether we need it for political reasons in town to give it statutory power for trees in town. He wants the latter.

Riparian Protection Ordinance – in progress - Linda update: DPW is excited about it - based upon DEP's version - it has to do with Squier House and how effective enforcement is with infractions. We could use it to get protection in the municipal level. We would be able to penalize those who take down trees without authorization. We would need to make sure that fines are substantial to outweigh developers costs. Jessica wondered if we could other areas like regrading and harmful chemicals to the ordinance. Linda has a boilerplate and will send it around. David asked where the riparian zones actually are. Linda notes that we can establish them in the ordinance. Jessica also suggested slope management be included. General discussion about what exactly constitutes a "riparian zone". Linda notes that we can ask Kirk exactly what makes up a riparian zone. Linda doesn't believe that anyone has mapped riparian zones. Walter notes that we have wetlands mapped as part of the NRI, but he doesn't know if we have rivulets or underground streams mapped out. Linda notes we can ask our intern to research for NRI. Bill says there are other mapping resources out there. He notes that Kirk linked him to info - it was a statewide map. We should definitely touch base with Kirk. Walter notes that flood maps have changed, too.

Tree Protection Ordinance – in progress - Michael update - had another meeting with David and Jessica - next step is to sit down with Bill and Karen to get their feedback and see if they are on track. Bill and Karen are happy to do so.

3. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS, ISSUES, etc.

NJUCF and American Water Grants successfully closed out! Linda notes that good news is we closed these out once and for all so we can apply for new grants. Andy Stone notes that we will probably find grant money for a rain garden near the river. Karen notes that there is an opportunity for a rain garden at the Baird Center and a grant for that would be awesome. As soon as the construction is done, they will put in the garden at the entranceway. Walter noted that the architects are supposed to do that - Bill also said that we could advise and the cost should be included in the project. Barbara worried about what plants they might be installing and whether they will be native plants. Bill agrees that we should stay vigilant. Linda notes that we should look at the whole landscaping plan for the Baird and make sure that native plants are

used. Jessica notes that ANJEC has sample ordinances to require all contractors to plant native. David agrees that there should be guidelines.

Founders Park Conservancy - Jessica - trying to get back on getting the blacktop taken up. The design review board is looking at the storage structure - a big expanse of grey - hope to get some good ideas. Bill hopes to get that blacktop removed with new Bobcat for DPW.

Meadowland Park Conservancy - maps are in development - current ones are not proper. They are getting started on Gold Star Garden - will keep you posted.

Farrell Field Park Conservancy - Richard noted that new tennis courts are coming - an RFP has been announced. He also spoke of their Donate a Bench program, which will kick off in May with a memorial bench dedicated to Rich Bruno, who passed away suddenly in January.

Community Garden - Olivia Lewis-Chang is working with the middle school to create young gardeners - nothing solid yet. Working with Anthony Cicenía - great partner.

School Update - no update beyond native plants. Jessica notes she worked at CHS on winter sewing - a lot of native gardeners - the horticulture club is going to redo the corner of Parker and Academy.

Shade Tree - David notes that last year we lost 242 trees. Also, we need to talk about communication - how are we going to communicate and how we will get the word out - publicity and central place for people to get info. Michael notes that 242 was private trees - you can add 190 trees that DPW cut down and others, our tree loss was over 500 - a very big number. Jessica notes that the only way we will make our goal of planting is to do two plantings, but the money is not going to be there until April, which only allows us to do a fall planting. Will this be an ongoing issue? Will we never have money in the first quarter? Linda notes that we will have to pad the budget "a quarter ahead". Jessica notes that we need to have a plan at the next meeting. Karen notes that she believes that trees are a capital expense, not an operating expense - there are different rules on that - so there may be money left over from last year's capital budget and she will take a look at that. She hopes we can have an answer very soon. Barbara notes that there were issues with some trees that were planted last year and not sure how to avoid that this year - we can't lose 20% just because of incorrect planting - not sure what happened - we can't sustain that level of loss. Bill notes he had a conversation with Mike about trees that were planted too deep. He will make sure they use best practices. Barb notes that CTE certification is well worth it. Bill says that Don Franklin is CTE and Dylan Costa is close to getting CTE. We also have Rich W. David notes that there is a protocol that we leave info on people's doorknobs and he wants to continue doing that. Jessica suggested we work out how they will interact with DPW on planting.

SO Development Committee - Rob Orgera - we were invited as guest at Development Committee for the new building and they were talking about logistics, address, services, etc. They accepted comments from Linda, David and others. There will be an attempt to have us participate in those meetings going forward so we will be included before it goes to the planning board. Sheena requested that we be sent the landscaping plan. Linda notes is a big win for us to be involved in the process early on. Rob will work on a list to give to the committee. Bill notes that they definitely want to see that document.

Open Space Trust Fund - Bill update - no update at this time.

Waste Nothing - Michael notes they brought the group back to life. Much of the stuff has already been discussed here. They had a call with Fairlawn and got a lot of info. They discussed legal changes in a new law signed in January - every year there will a higher percentage for price of recycling. Take out food container law also going into effect this year. They want to prepare an information flyer for restaurants. Association of Glass Packaging people have argued that the key to increase recycling is to get the glass out of single stream and build a structure for separating glass, which will help drive prices higher. Michael notes that glass is 100% recyclable. He notes there are buyers ready to buy our glass. Rob notes that glass is being used as substitute for stone gravel. Michael notes that having the glass turned back into bottles is the goal. Bill wonders if there are any timing issues for the buyer. Michael will research.

Notable Public Trees – Linda's plan was to do a tour of notable trees. Walter though has more ideas. He notes that we should do promotion about trees, showing all their values for stormwater mitigation and other public benefits. He has figured out in Tree Plotter how to create a template so they can talk with Trustees about financial value for trees. He would like to start doing social media posts about cool trees in town - hero trees, oldest trees, largest, tallest, rarest species, etc. Also heritage species - apple trees from 100 years ago still here? Also, evolution stars like Oak trees who support others, and finally, majestic trees. Feel free to send info on trees to Walter - it will be a regular social media thing - give people in town info about specific trees and the \$ value trees give back to our town.

Greenway - Bill update - 2022 is our year - it was reported during meetings - they are working with Adam on getting next steps in place - they are meeting with Dept. of Transportation on Feb. 10th. The bid documents are ready - they can go out to bid sometime shortly after that. The start date will be June - July after nesting bird season. That's the game plan, and more to come.

Adopt-a-Storm-Drain – hold for Feb. meeting

Leaf Management - Jessica notes that the Fairlawn person had something interesting to say - they don't collect the leaves - up until last year they did what we do but they changed to require owners to bag them - they do allow lawn contractors to bring leaves to their yard. Very interesting. Linda notes that Harding Township also requires people to get rid of their own leaves. Karen says that the cost of picking up the leaves is substantial, so the time is now - let's bite the bullet - this is the year of the environment. How we deal with leaves is really a dumb policy. Let's do it now. Jessica - think of all the things that DPW could be doing with that time. Start with requiring bags and then go to no pickup. Bill notes there was an article published in the Gaslight in 2008 about the costs of leaf pickup - up to \$100K? Karen says we will have number this year so people can see the cost.

Home Composting Pilot – realistic for SO? Linda reports: Pilot being done in Maplewood and Millburn. MW has 55 households and relatively same in Millburn. We can learn from Maplewood and Millburn and since the project can't grow past a certain size and our DPW isn't equipped, those particular programs don't seem to be right for SO. Linda asked the Commissioners if they wanted us to look into it any further or if they were okay with passing on it, based on the research she did. We collectively agreed to move on. She agrees it is not right for us. She would rather use that money for other purposes. She will send out more info via email.

Village Solar and Climate - Rob notes that they were looking into adding solar to commercial and municipal buildings, but then realized it more getting the buildings in town more energy efficient. That needs a consultant to do that analysis and with that data we could improve that

building over time. It was thought that SOPAC would be a good starting project. The BOT would have to set a direction to become more sustainable community - there is a lot involved. Linda notes that we met because Trustee Coallier asked about getting solar on SOPAC. Sustainable Essex Alliance program is about to be launched, so we are hoping to have 13 households in South Orange running parallel with this SOPAC program. We want to investigate if SOPAC can partially fund this investment and perhaps get CinemaLab involved. Rob has a document that can be shared with the BOT. Jessica asked if this is being considered for the Baird. Walter notes that it's too late now. The roof on the Baird is not an option for solar. General discussion about energy efficiency for the Baird.

Organic Field Treatment Extension – no update from George. We did follow up on a letter that was sent on behalf of the program. Floods Hill will continue to be organically managed. There are also ideas about expanding into more formal sports space areas.

Rain garden/American Water Grant - covered already.

Cannabis Ordinances - Linda notes that we should come up with our bullet point asks and she will write them up on behalf of the Commission and send them Trustee Zuckerman. She wants to go directly to him and talk about them. Jessica - "manufacturing" is the issue. Linda wants a list. Jessica notes there are fire hazard concerns, too. There was general discussion about manufacturing. Strong feelings expressed about the issue were expressed. Richard noted that it sounded very similar to the issue that Farrell Field dealt with 20 years ago with the Animal Shelter and has the potential to divide the Village between those who think it is good for South Orange economically vs. those who live in the area who feel their quality of life will be harmed by odors and other industrial hazards. David notes that we should vote before the Feb. 14 meeting. Linda says we need to send a list of questions to Trustee Zuckerman and see what the answers are. Let's get as much information as we can before we make a statement. Bill notes that second reading will be on February 28th, but there will be a presentation on February 14th.

Squier House – Developer to meet again with Planning Board in March regarding illegal cutting.

4. COMMUNICATIONS - Walter & Linda

FB: 851 (up from 848) followers), IG: 316 (up from 308) followers

5. WORK DAYS - Most Sundays, 9:00 am - 11:00 pm. Larry suggested getting a news report for March meeting. He will work on it.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE – 02/24/22 - 7:30 pm

7. ADJOURNMENT